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The American Institute of Sacred Literature

SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS OF CLUBS USING THE OUTLINE COURSES

Every month from October to June there will be presented in this department of the BIBLICAL WORLD suggestions to leaders of Bible Classes desiring to use as a basis for class work either the outline Bible-study course on "THE LIFE OF CHRIST" prepared by Ernest D. Burton, or that on "THE FORESHADOWINGS OF THE CHRIST" by William R. Harper. Suggestions are prepared by Georgia Louise Chamberlin, Secretary of the Reading and Library Department of the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE, who will be glad to consider any questions which club leaders may choose to address to the INSTITUTE.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST¹

The life of Jesus was many-sided. It is impossible for a class to get a clear picture of Jesus in all the aspects of his life from the brief study which is comprehended in this course. It is necessary, therefore, to choose a line of emphasis which will impress the student with some particular phase of the character and work of Jesus. The spiritual insight of Jesus and his moral courage in proclaiming his message is perhaps most essential for inspiration in Christian living, and the suggestions for leaders of classes will tend in this direction.

In order to understand these phases of Jesus' character, it is necessary to bring his teaching into contrast with the religious ideals of his times, as they were expressed in the words of his antagonists, and in the religious institutions of the Jewish people. To the extent to which this knowledge must be gained from sources outside the Bible the leader should be responsible for the work. It may be that members of the class will have access to libraries and can make some independent investigation, but in general the policy of holding the class to the study of the Bible itself will give its members ability to see facts hitherto overlooked, to weigh them, and to draw impressions for themselves from a source which is always open to them.

¹ The textbook for this course is *The Life of Christ*, by Ernest D. Burton; 50 cents, plus 4 cents postage. Address the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE, The University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

The value of drill-work in this course should not be miscalculated. Students are asked to memorize the outline at least in its larger divisions. This seemingly mechanical work provides a skeleton only, and is valueless without the sympathetic interpretation of the words and thought of Jesus back of this outline. The memoriter work should therefore follow the fuller treatment of the period covered and be insisted upon only for those who feel its value to themselves.

Program I

Leader: (1) The significance of the temple and its ministry to the Jewish people. (2) The common fate of religious leaders among the Jews in the centuries before Christ. (3) The spiritual vision of Jesus contrasted with the literalism of his day.

Members of the class: (1) Jesus in the Temple at thirty years of age and at twelve years of age—a comparison. (2) The conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus. Let this conversation be arranged as a dialogue, with an explanatory discussion, thus: “Now there was a man of the Pharisees named, etc.” *Nicodemus:* “Rabbi, we know, etc.” *Jesus:* “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, etc.” *Nicodemus:* “How can a man, etc.” (3) Samaria in Jewish history. (4) The conversation with the Samaritan woman. Treat this in the same manner as No. 2, and in addition divide the dialogue into scenes: Scene I, vss. 6–7 and following. Scene II, vs. 28 and following. (5) Concert recitation of chapters and section-titles thus far covered.

Subject for discussion: To what extent does the action of Jesus in the Temple indicate what his attitude would be toward uses to which places of worship should be put in our own times?

Program II

Leader: The evidence of definite plans in the mind of Jesus for organizing his work as indicated in (a) choosing disciples; (b) adopting a policy in work; (c) fixing an attitude toward the religious customs of his day—the synagogue, feasts, fasts, etc.

Members of the class: (1) An imaginary description of “The day of Miracles” in Capernaum. (2) A comparison of Jesus’ reception in Capernaum and Nazareth, accounting for the difference. (3) Jesus at an ancient “Sanitarium.” Tell the story and discuss its outcome as affecting the future of Jesus. (4) The motives of Jesus in healing men, as they have been stated or implied in the narratives of healing already studied. (5) Jesus’ statements about himself contained in the work of

this month. (6) Conflict between Jesus and the Jews—how it began and the steps by which it went forward. (7) A map review.

Subject for discussion: General principles upon which Jesus settled matters relating to the observance of the Sabbath.

REFERENCE READING

Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. I, pp. 364-460; Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, chaps. xiii, xiv, xv; McCoun, *The Holy Land in Geography and History*; Holtzmann, *The Life of Jesus*, pp. 155-231; Sanday, *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, pp. 101-117; Gilbert, *The Student's Life of Jesus*, pp. 158-206; Rhees, *The Life of Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 101-124; Farrar, *Life of Christ*, pp. 183-249; Dawson, *Life of Christ*, pp. 94-169; Burton and Mathews, *Life of Christ*, Secs. 27-46; Burgess, *Life of Christ*, Secs. 27-46.

Consult also Hastings, four-volume and one-volume editions of the *Bible Dictionary*, and Hastings, *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.

THE FORESHADOWINGS OF THE CHRIST¹

The period of turmoil which accompanied the transformation of the Hebrew people from an aggregate of tribes to a nation unified in form, if not in spirit, could hardly be expected to contain crystallized expressions of new religious thought and feeling. On the other hand, the greatest men of genius in the world's history have seemed to be the product of revolutions, and religious and political upheavals. We are not surprised, therefore, to find a Samuel coming to the front in Israelitish history after the conquest, with a contribution not only to political advancement, but as a forerunner of the greatest idealist in early Israel—David, the poet, warrior, and king.

There is so little evidence as to the extent of David's relationship to the Psalter, that only a few psalms are selected as evidence of religious idealism in this period. We look rather at the man Samuel and the man David as presenting in themselves qualities which were essential to the well-being of that messianic kingdom, which was to occupy the thought of the people for many generations. While we must estimate these men by the standards of their own times, having done that as best we may, we should still further modify our conclusions by the fact that David remained through all the years of the nation's life the ideal type of man and king, not only in the hearts of the people, but in their calm judgment as well. To compel the class to feel the strength of

¹ The textbook for this course is *The Foreshadowings of the Christ*, by William Rainey Harper, 50 cents, plus 4 cents postage. Address The AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE, The University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

these two men and their relationship to the developing ideals of the people is an important task. Each of these men was, to a certain extent, himself a foreshadowing of the Messiah.

Program I

Leader: (1) A rapid sketch of the conquest period. (2) The political, social, and religious conditions in Israel during this period. (3) The rise of prophecy and the schools of the prophets. (4) The problems faced by Samuel.

Members of the class: (1) Samuel, the child, the priest, the statesman, the prophet. (2) Stories of Saul illustrating different phases of his character. (3) Stories of David illustrating his character. (4) Selected readings from Browning's "Saul." (5) Reading of Ps. 8 as representing the highest ideal of man in this period.

Subject for discussion: The characteristics of the Hebrew idea of God in this period.

Program II

Leader: (1) Jerusalem in history and story previous to David. (2) The limitations of military government as distinguished from civic and religious. (3) The world surrounding Palestine at the time of David.

Members of the class: (1) David's ideal of the capital city. (2) The story of the bringing up of the ark. (I Sam., chap. 6.) (3) Reading of Ps. 24. (4) The organization of a cabinet. (5) David's relation to the order of the prophets. (The story of Nathan.)

Subject for discussion: Facts and speculation as to the causes for the division of the kingdom of Solomon.

REFERENCE READING

Batten, *The Hebrew Prophet*, chaps. 3, 4; Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy*, chap. 5; Goodspeed, *Israel's Messianic Hope*, chap. 3; Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 27, 28; Orelli, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 148-188; George Adam Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I, pp. 11-24; Harper, *The Prophetic Element in the Old Testament*, chap. 4; Chamberlin, *The Hebrew Prophets*, pp. 1-26; Moore, "Judges," introduction (*International Critical Commentary*); Kirkpatrick, "Samuel," introduction (*Cambridge Bible*), "Samuel," *Century Bible*; special articles in the dictionaries on "Samuel," "Saul," "David," "Prophets," "Schools of Prophets," "Psalms," "Ark," "The Book of Judges," etc.